



Morning Alert - Thursday, October 5, 2017

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that President Trump visited Las Vegas and met with people who were wounded in the shooting massacre on Sunday. TV Asahi led with a speculative story that Party of Hope leader Koike is hoping to invite LDP lawmakers Shigeru Ishiba and Seiko Noda to join her party if it fails to gain a majority of seats in the election, noting that Koike did not field any candidates in their constituencies. TBS also led with a report on the Party of Hope, saying that although Koike was hoping to obtain the support of Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Rengo chairman Kozu announced yesterday that the group will not back any specific party. Fuji TV gave top play to a report that a former NHK reporter died of a heart attack after working 159 hours overtime in one month. NTV led with a report on a fire that broke out in a building in Nishimachi, Tokyo, on Wednesday.

Top stories in national dailies included the Nuclear Regulation Authority's approval of TEPCO's safety measures for Reactors No. 6 and 7 at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant in Niigata Prefecture (Asahi); the Party of Hope's draft campaign pledges, including suspending the planned consumption tax hike in October 2019, phasing out dependence on nuclear energy by 2030, and holding discussions on constitutional revision (Mainichi); an interview with Prime Minister Abe, in which he pledged to accelerate the implementation of Abenomics to boost the Japanese economy (Yomiuri); a plan by Novartis to urge the GOJ to adopt a pricing model linked to patient outcomes (Nikkei); and an interview with Democratic Party President Maehara, in which he indicated the possibility of Tokyo Governor Koike running in the Oct. 22 general election (Sankei).

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump, PM Abe speak by phone

Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Sankei wrote that during a telephone conversation with President Trump on Wednesday evening (Japan time), Prime Minister Abe expressed his condolences to the victims of the Las Vegas attack and their families by saying that he and the Japanese people stand with the President and the American people 100% in these difficult times for the United States. According to a GOJ briefing, the President thanked the prime minister for his condolences and called Abe a true friend. The two leaders reportedly said to each other that they are looking forward to meeting again in Tokyo in early November. They also discussed North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and shared the view that dialogue with Pyongyang would be meaningless if it were just for the sake of dialogue and that it is important for the international community to continue to put maximum pressure on North Korea.

Secretary Tillerson denies U.S. media report that he was on verge of quitting

Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that Secretary of State Tillerson on Wednesday denied a NBC report that he was on the verge of resigning this past summer due to policy differences with President Trump. The Secretary told a news conference that he has never considered leaving the post. The President criticized NBC for publishing a "fake news" story, saying on Twitter that the broadcaster should issue an apology to America.

Senior North Korean official may hold discussions with former USG officials in Moscow

Wednesday evening's Asahi wrote from Seoul that Choe Son Hui, the director general of the North American department of North Korea's foreign ministry, will attend the 2017 Moscow Nonproliferation Conference to be held in Moscow on Oct. 19-21. The paper wrote that attention is focused on whether Choe will hold behind-the-scenes talks with former USG officials on the sidelines of the conference. According to the paper, former Under Secretary of State Sherman and former Assistant Secretary of State Einhorn, both of whom worked on Secretary of State Albright's visit to Pyongyang in 2000 under the Clinton administration, and nuclear expert Hecker, who visited the uranium enrichment facility in Yongbyon in North Korea in 2010, will attend the international conference. This morning's Yomiuri, Nikkei, and Sankei ran similar reports.

San Francisco mayor indicates intention to accept comfort women statue as donation

Sankei front-paged a report saying that Osaka Mayor Yoshimura announced on Wednesday that he has received a letter from San Francisco Mayor Lee in response to his Sept. 29 letter asking the San Francisco authorities not to accept a statue symbolizing the comfort women from a citizens' group as a donation. According to Yoshimura, the San Francisco mayor stated in the letter that it is his responsibility to accommodate the wishes of local citizens. The Osaka mayor stated that he will

make moves to end Osaka's sister city relationship with San Francisco if San Francisco accepts the statue.

Dalai Lama cancels planned trip to Japan

Mainichi wrote that the Tokyo office of the Dalai Lama disclosed on Wednesday that the Dalai Lama, who lives in exile in India, has cancelled his planned trip to Japan in November based on his doctor's advice that the 82-year-old spiritual leader refrain from long-distance travel and rest instead.

SECURITY

Osprey that made "emergency landing" leaves Ishigaki

Mainichi wrote that a Futenma-based Osprey that made a precautionary landing at Ishigaki Airport in Okinawa on Sept. 29 when a warning appeared on its instrument panel left the airport on Wednesday after being inspected by the U.S. military. The paper wrote that the U.S. military has made no official announcement on either the cause of the incident or the results of the inspection and that the Okinawa Prefectural Government has told the GOJ that the Osprey should not fly until the cause of the emergency landing has been determined. The paper also wrote that residents of Okinawa and Saga, where the GSDF plans to deploy Ospreys, are becoming increasingly concerned about the safety of the aircraft in view of the numerous accidents and incidents involving Ospreys that have happened since they were deployed in Okinawa five years ago.

Fuji TV reported this morning that the Osprey returned to MCAS Futenma late last night, noting that the USFJ released a comment through the Okinawa Defense Bureau saying it will conduct daily maintenance and inspections more robustly and take all possible measures.

POLITICS

Koike hints at possibility of post-election alliance with LDP without Abe

Asahi reported on remarks made to the press on Wednesday by Tokyo Governor Koike, who leads the Party of Hope. While denying the possibility of forming an alliance with Prime Minister Abe after the Oct. 22 general election, Koike hinted at the possibility of working with the LDP if it is led by someone other than Abe.

Poll: 35% support LDP, 12% favor Party of Hope

Asahi reported on the results of its nationwide telephone poll conducted on Oct. 3-4, in which 35% of respondents said that they will vote for the LDP in the proportional representation segment of the Lower House election on Oct. 22, while 12% said they will vote for the Party of Hope. Both the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and the Komeito Party received support ratings of 7%, while 6% backed the Japanese Communist Party and 4% selected Nippon Ishin. However, among non-affiliated voters, 17% chose the LDP and 13% picked the Party of Hope.

